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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KINSHASA 001160

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#) [MONUC](#)

SUBJECT: KEEPING PEACE NOT MAKING WAR: DRC WELCOMES QUAD
MEETING, VERIFICATION MISSION

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During June 22 meetings with President Kabila, VPs Bemba (MLC) and Ruberwa (RCD), visiting DAS Don Yamamoto and AF/C Director Al Eastham noted U.S. concern with the security situation in Eastern Congo, including the buildup of government troops; assured Congolese officials that, in the USG view, Rwandan support for rebel forces or Rwandan military intervention in the Congo are unacceptable; asked for - and received - Congolese endorsement of joint border patrols (with Monuc facilitation) in the Kivus, and urged the government to move swiftly on long-overdue military integration. Bemba was most hawkish, openly stating that MLC forces are deploying to eastern Congo as part of the FARDC mobilization, and implying they are there to counter a possible Rwandan incursion. Ruberwa laid much of the blame for developments in eastern Congo on shortcomings of the transition in Kinshasa and the government's failure to resolve the uncertain status of former RCD military commanders. Nonetheless, he agreed the Nkunda and Mutebusi constituted 'insurrectional elements' and that the best solution would be for them to go into exile. President Kabila said FARDC forces would defend Congolese territory and that he had not ruled out a military solution to the Nkunda/Mutebusi problem. He said efforts to restore relations with Rwanda would take time. He said he had agreed to meet Kagame in Abuja on June 25, and also welcomed Yamamoto's suggestion that the next quadripartite talks be held in Kinshasa o/a the week of July 19. The Yamamoto delegation also met with SRSB as well as French, Belgian and British Ambassadors (and visiting British junior minister) to ensure a coherent message among the principal players. Belgium signaled the EU's intention to hold a meeting in Belgium in early July to examine ways in which to help address the economic crisis in Congo, and said the EU will welcome U.S. participation. End Summary.

12. (C) During their June 22 flying visit, DAS Don Yamamoto and AF/C Director Al Eastham informed their Congolese interlocutors that Secretary Powell and NSC Rice had been in contact with Presidents Kabila and Kagame to urge both to deal with the serious security situation in the eastern Congo with restraint. Yamamoto stressed that the success of the transition remains a priority U.S. objective; that we believe that joint border patrols in the Kivus would be a good first step to help defuse eastern tensions; and that Monuc is an essential partner to the transition and efforts to ensure elections, and suggested that the next round of quadripartite talks be held in Kinshasa on/about the week of July 19. He also reminded Congolese officials of the importance of maintaining the solidarity of the transition government, maintaining good communications with Uganda and Rwanda, beginning military integration and pressing forward on elections preparations.

Bemba, The Practical Hawk

13. (C) MLC VP Bemba said that when the transition government was formed last July, no one believed that there would be a new rebellion in the East, but the debate on the appointment of new provincial governors triggered the old Rwandan "game" of trying to keep control of the eastern provinces, particularly the Kivus. One unintended result of their aggression, he confirmed, is an improved relationship between the MLC and President Kabila. He said that the MLC (and particularly he, personally) is convinced that Rwanda is directly involved in the events in the East. The MLC is completely committed to fighting this aggression, he said, and if necessary will commit its entire 20,000 troops to the effort. (Note: The MLC seems to have already dispatched about 5,000 MLC troops to the East, and Bemba's own private aircraft have been assisting in the airlift of these as well as FARDC forces. End Note.) Bemba insisted, repeatedly and forcefully, that Laurent Nkunda is a Rwandan, not Congolese; said that he has known Nkunda since the days when Nkunda was a Rwandan intelligence officer in Kisangani and Bemba was starting the MLC forces there. As for the fate of Nkunda and Mutebusi, Bemba bluntly said that Rwanda should take back its officers or they would be killed. Likewise, Bemba insisted that the FARDC is not capable of combating the Rwandans (we agree), that only the MLC is able to respond quickly and in concentrated numbers, i.e., use the Rwandan tactics against them. He reminded his visitors that he "had trained" with

Museveni, who knows Rwandan tactics, and said that he had personally advised President Kabila where the government troops should be deployed. He said that to date, the government deployment has only cost \$4 million, and has been funded without affecting the budget. He dismissed Uganda as a possible security threat at this time, characterizing them as less interested than Rwanda in maintaining their presence in the Congo. (Comment: While we agree in principle, his statement is a bit disingenuous, given his training in and links to Uganda. End Comment.) Instead, he insisted that the government had obtained a copy of a Rwandan plan to attack the eastern Congo (note: Embassy also had heard this from Presidential National Security Advisor, end note) and that GDRC actions are preventive and defensive in nature, responding to elements of this plan.

14. (C) Bemba emphasized the importance of the international community's clearly and quickly telling President Kagame that "the game is over." Referring to current Rwandan allegations that the government is again arming the FDLR to fight Rwanda, he questioned rhetorically how that would be possible, now that Monuc is in touch with the FDLR and has been working with them on voluntary repatriation. Bemba repeatedly endorsed Yamamoto's call for joint Congolese-Rwandan border patrols (with Monuc supervision/facilitation), calling this a "perfect solution" to the Rwandan allegations of FDLR buildups - and, on the Congolese side, to allegations of penetration of DRC territory by Rwandan troops. Likewise, he welcomed the second quadripartite meeting and urged that it be held as soon as possible. He agreed that elections are essential, noting that the government had been surprised by the large mobilization of the Congolese public to protest Monuc and government inaction. Meanwhile, current events in the East have set back by at least one year his efforts to attract investors to the Congo, he said, noting that even good economic variables (4% inflation, 6% growth and a stable exchange rate) are not enough to overcome a tenuous security climate.

Ruberwa, The Concerned Conciliator

15. (C) RCD VP Ruberwa, whose response to the crisis in the East can best be characterized as confused dithering, tried to portray himself as conciliatory toward government and MLC exclusionary tactics. He bemoaned the current climate of distrust, and noted that an alignment of some transition elements against others could ultimately ensure the demise of the transition. Events in the East, while troubling, pose far less of a threat to the transition than does the current way in which the government is operating. For instance, deploying troops to the East without full and frank consultations with all the government elements, and without the consent of all the government elements, is not only very troubling but does not send a good signal for the possibility of military integration. He also noted that if foreign troops again enter the DRC, it would be the end of the transition. As to the eastern situation itself, in many ways it was completely predictable -- officers (mostly RCD) like Nkunda and Mutebusi have become restless because their situation is too nebulous, their futures unclear, the absence of military integration/restructuring is a major factor in their decision to take the actions they have taken. Ruberwa did, however, concede that Nkunda (and Mutebusi) represented 'insurrectional elements' and should probably go into exile for 3-5 years, that this would be the best solution - but not in Rwanda. (Note: Mutebusi had, earlier that day, crossed into Rwanda with about 300 of his troops and given up his arms (septel). End Note.) Their men, however, should not be punished but rather broken up and integrated into the new Congolese military. (Comment: This solution could perpetuate the problem of alleged penetration of the Congolese military by the Rwandan military. End Comment.)

16. (C) Ruberwa said that if the situation is to be defused, both sides must recognize the other's concerns, i.e., Congo considers that Rwanda is fueling aggression in the east, but Rwanda views with concern recent alleged DRC re-arming of the FDLR, therefore both states are acting from justifiable motives of self-defense. (Note: There is no evidence at this time of any large-scale FDLR involvement in the Kivus situation, although a few -- around 40-60 -- FDLR troops may be mixed into Mai Mai elements who are assisting FARDC troops in south S. Kivu. End Note.) The U.S. can play a key role in facilitating dialog and understanding, Ruberwa said. He was less enthusiastic about the U.S. proposal for joint patrols, but did acknowledge its potential usefulness. His lukewarm reaction may have been related to his subsequent criticism of Monuc for not having already utilized its Chapter VII authority to attack the FDLR and drive them out of the Congo, or, at the very least, to disarm them and thereby eliminate their threat to Rwanda. Ruberwa cautioned that although the RCD wants to stay in the transition government, the confidence and communication issues must be addressed to ensure the RCDs continued participation.

President, In Control

17. (C) President Kabila began the meeting by saying that everyone involved in setting up the transition government seems to have underestimated the enormity and complexity of the tasks to be accomplished in two short years, particularly when the government would be encumbered with a bureaucratic, heavy structure. However, he said, he had reassured both the Secretary and NSC Rice that all other problems can be

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overcome, as long as the situation in the East is quickly controlled. Rwanda's allegations of ethnic genocide, or its current insistence on an FDLR plot, are pretexts. The real problem lies in conflicting political, economic and social interests, and geography doesn't help. Bukavu is only 100 kilometers from Kigali, but is 2,000 kilometers from Kinshasa. As he sees it, there are four key elements in dealing with the current situation: maintaining communications with Rwanda (he pointed to the upcoming June 25 meeting in Nigeria between himself and Kagame); military integration; ethnic relations, in which, he said, the government will resolve the Banyamulenge situation, and certainly refugees should return to the Kivus, as their safety is assured; and, elections.

18. (C) The Congo doesn't want war, but a military solution against Nkunda cannot be ruled out. The government has taken appropriate steps to contain the problem and limit the consequences for the transition, he said, and also will take advantage of the presence of a large number of government troops in the East to begin the process of military integration, thereby advancing a second key objective. He endorsed the concept of joint border patrols as a verification and security measure (although Rwandan troops on Congolese soil is completely unacceptable), and indicated that if these are successful it could pave the way for a broader improvement in Congolese-Rwandan relations, including reopening of embassies and an exchange of ambassadors. Fundamentally important, however, is a climate of mutual respect. Kabila welcomed the proposed second round of quadripartite talks in Kinshasa, and noted that these talks could help lay the foundation for a successful Great Lakes conference by helping to improve bilateral relations between the DRC-Rwanda and the DRC-Uganda.

19. (C) He welcomed the U.S. message that the presence of Rwandan troops in the Congo would be unacceptable, but (somewhat stiffly) seemed to object to the broader message than the presence of other foreign troops in the Congo, who could be hard to get rid of, could endanger the transition. He noted that Congo's friends in Belgium, S. Africa, Angola and Nigeria have committed themselves to help defend the Congo or train its security forces. He mused that Ruberwa must choose what to do, since he finds himself in a situation in which his cousins are fighting the government to which he belongs. Kabila concluded by saying that the current situation in the East is like turbulence during a long airflight -- something to be expected but which must be overcome so that the flight is not diverted.

MONUC's Mandate

110. (C) SRSG Swing admitted that MONUC cannot handle two crises at once. MONUC's June mandate renewal request will focus on MONUC's current strategic objectives and request more troops and civilian police. He understood that peacekeeping funding is very competitive and agreed that MONUC's mandate should be refined. Swing described MONUC's proposal for a joint MONUC-DRC-Rwanda border verification mechanism. He cautioned that Rwanda has so far opposed MONUC's draft TOR for the mechanism. In the wake of recent anti-MONUC demonstrations, MONUC is upgrading its physical security, working to improve relations with Rwanda, and seeking to improve its public image by meeting with more Congolese groups and producing a flyer (in multiple languages) to explain MONUC's mandate and activities.

111. (C) Yamamoto also met with French, Belgian, and UK Ambassadors, and visiting British Junior Foreign Minister Chris Mullen (who will also travel to Kigali) to ensure a coordinated message to the GDRC and GOR.

COMMENT

112. (C) The Yamamoto visit underscored USG concern about the current political/security environment in Congo. Along with other diplomatic initiatives (e.g., the British) this pressure may help to walk the Congolese and Rwandans back

from a potential confrontation. Although the situation remains dangerous -- with continued rebel troop movements, threatening statements by Rwanda, and a build-up of GDRC forces -- we are mildly encouraged by Kabila's commitment to meet with Kagame in Abuja and strong support for continuation of the quadripartite dialogue begun in Washington in May.

HOOKS